

I think this clause admits too much. I believe a contingency might arise in relation to the national government & in case of the safety of the whole country (in case of war for instance) in which Congress might, without violating the Constitution of the U. S., give freedom on certain conditions to any number, or even all, of the slaves. Moreover, supposing Congress had actually entertained J. D. Adams' proposition the last session, to provide by altering the Constitution so that slavery might be gradually abolished throughout the country, & had passed laws accordingly; in this case Congress would have "legislated in regard to its (slavery,) abolition" in each & all of the States. True the States too must legislate in concurrence with Congress, but the legislation of the States would not be "exclusive". I should hope, therefore, that this word at least, exclusive, sh^d be excluded from the Constitution of the Society. As to all the rest, I would ^{hold} fast upon it with an unshrink-
ing grasp. But I must stop. Fare you better, for the slave.
Rufus A. Patterson.

Recd
Hickory Hill Dec 10
Chapel Hill 27

Wm. James A. Muller,

Boston, Mass.

(Per mail)

J. A. M.

Anti-slavery societies (2 of course upon the anti-slavery cause) which is called the "woman question." I think the principles contended for in this matter, if carried out, would strike a death-blow to the present & lowest social condition of man, & would tear up & ruin the broadest & surest foundations of human virtue & happiness. So also in regard to the "no-government" theory, could they really succeed & carry out their principles, human society would inevitably become a chaos of moral, political & social disorder, in which uncleanliness, crime, & guilt and ~~every~~ misery would abound in every form. Might would be right. Debauchery would reign without restraint. Instead of universal liberty there would be universal despotism & slavery. Earth would be a moral slaughter-house - a literal hell, a field of smelly & blood.

Viewing things in this light, my feeling is almost unconquerable to be at N.Y. the 7th of next month. I cannot ~~stop~~ crying out, 'O that I had wings that in a moment I might fly to the desired spot.' Nothing but a consciousness of the will of God (made known by the many providential hindrances in the way) reconciles me to the idea of absence. Your meeting will be a most important one to the cause of the slave, & of right universal freedom. God be with you & give users to the side of truth & righteousness. But should you fail - should the discontents succeed - the cause surely will not be given up. Should the present organization be sent in ruins, God can collect the fragments, and, under his eye, with the light of past experience, perhaps, as good, or a better, organization can be renewed, & the cause still go on with redoubled energy. I repeat, Have faith in God.

One word in regard to the Constitution of the Am. Soc. If this Constitution were now to be formed, I should certainly object to one clause referred to in your letter, that is this - "While it admits that each State is - has the exclusive right to legislate in regard to its abolition in said State &c."

In regard to the main subject of your conversation, I must say, that I am not much surprised at the state of things as it relates to some of the leading abolitionists of Mass. & the National Society. I have watched the spirit & movements of certain men in your State; & I have thought & expected that some such crisis, ~~or~~ now exists, would come. It is deeply to be lamented that there should be the least possible division & hostility among the anti-slavery ranks; but if it must be so, if the trial must come - no matter how soon. In this view of the subject I am glad that some important questions & principles - not so distinctly perceived & understood by abolitionists in general for the beginning, are about to be thoroughly viewed & I hope, settled on a firm basis. With the proceedings of the Society at N. Y. I have always been very well satisfied; but I have for a long time perceived that certain persons at Boston have not been thus satisfied. They have not been able to keep the N. Y. Committee under their control & dictate their measures; hence uneasiness & jealousy have arisen, & hostile feelings cherished, till an open opposition has at last been manifested. I was struck with the strange & I think, unworthy & jealous spirit manifested in the call for the last Quarterly meeting of the Mass. State Society. It indicated a fear of losing influence & power - a fear of not standing at the head of this glorious enterprise. I do not wish to censure too strongly; I do wish to warn these persons of being false to the slave; but I think, that, in some respects at least, they know not what manner of spirit they are of; & by dragging in extraneous questions, are doing immense injury to the cause of true liberty. In this view of the subject it fills me with grief & astonishment that these persons will force upon these

Messrs. Scott & Phelps,

Rev. R. A. Putnam
Chichester N. H. Apr. 27, 1839

Dear Father,

91
You favor of the 20th inst.
I received two days since. I have read it with emotions
of deep grief & sorrow; but not of despair for the cause
of the slave. That cause is God's. It cannot fail. Om-
nipotence shields it. It may be retarded by the errors &
faults of its friends; but even these will be overruled by
God for good - & the eventual triumph of liberty will be
the more universal & thorough; & now will be the better
disposed to give all the glory to him, whose wisdom &
Omnipotence achieve it. We must not feel that this cause
is in the hands of men alone; nor must we trust it
there. We must trust it in the hands of God; have faith
in him; & notwithstanding difficulties, dangers, trials, both
from friends & foes, we ought not, & we must not, doubt
for a moment, that God will protect it & bring it to
a happy & glorious issue.

I regret exceedingly that I cannot be at N. Y.
at the An. Meeting of the National Society. I need
not state the hindrances; but they make it, not only
inconvenient, but as nearly impossible about as it can
be. I have made arrangements to be at Boston the
last week in May; & if there be anti-slavery meet-
ings there at that time, I shall attend them.

My name is not on the list of members
of the National Society; but, if it be proper, I wish
you would see it put on. I have contributed
\$5.00 to the N. H. State Society this year, & shall
do what my very limited means will permit, to advance
something to the National Society.